

THE REVOLT OF SHEBA

According to Josephus

Christopher Begg

The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C. 20064, USA

Introduction

The suppression of Absalom's revolt by Joab (2 Samuel 18) did not bring David's political troubles to an end. In fact, 2 Sam 20:1-22 tells of yet another revolt against the king, this one instigated by a Benjaminite named Sheba, which broke out shortly thereafter. The latter text, for its part, poses numerous textual, exegetical and historical difficulties.¹ In this essay, I wish to examine Josephus' re-telling, in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* (hereafter *Ant.*) 7.278-292, of this problem-filled Biblical text.² My investigation will take the form of a detailed

¹ On 2 Samuel 20, see in addition to the commentaries: H. Bardkte, "Der Aufstand des Scheba (2 Samuelis 20)," in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, ed. F. Paschke, Texte und Untersuchungen 125 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981), 15-27.

² For the writings of Josephus, I use H.St.J. Thackeray, R. Marcus, A. Wikgren and L.H. Feldman, eds., *Josephus*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1926-1965). *Ant.* 7.278-292 is found in vol. V., pp. 506-515, ed. by R. Marcus. I have likewise consulted the text and apparatus for *Ant.* 7.278-292 in B. Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera*, II (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955), 150-54. On Josephus' overall treatment of two of the leading characters of 2 Samuel 20, see L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of David," *HUCA* 60 (1989): 129-74; idem, "Josephus' Portrait of Joab," *Estudios Bíblicos* 51 (1993): 323-51.

comparison of *Ant.* 278-292 with its Biblical source, 2 Samuel 20, as represented by the following major witnesses: MT (BHS),³ Codex Vaticanus (hereafter B)⁴ and the Lucianic (hereafter L) or Antiochene MSS⁵ of the LXX as well as Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets (hereafter TJ).⁶ In carrying out this comparison, I shall be looking for answers to a number of overarching questions: Which text-form(s) of 2 Samuel 20 did Josephus have available? What sorts of "rewriting techniques" has he applied to his source? Are there noteworthy distinctive features to his account of Sheba's revolt which result from his application of those techniques? Finally, is Josephus' version of the Biblical incident intended to convey any particular messages to the double target audience of *Ant.*, i.e. cultivated Gentiles and fellow Jews?

In turning now to the comparison itself, I divide up the material into six parallel segments: 1) Revolt Initiated (2 Sam 20:1-2// *Ant.* 7.278-279a); 2) David's Concubines (20:3// 7.279b); 3) David's Countermeasures (20:4-6// 7.280-282); 4) Amasa Assassinated (20:7-10aba// 7.283-285); 5) Sheba Pursued (20:10bβ-13// 7.286-287); and 6) Sheba's End (20:14-22// 7.288-292).

³ In addition to MT, the Qumran MS 4QSam^a presents a somewhat divergent, but very fragmentary, Hebrew text of 2 Sam 20:2-3, 9-14, 23-26, see E.C. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, HSM 19 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1978), 271. For its readings see P.K. McCarter, Jr., *II Samuel*, AB 8 (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 426-29.

⁴ For B I use A.E. Brooke, N. Maclean and H.St.J. Thackeray, eds., *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Text of Codex Vaticanus, II:I, I and II Samuel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927). 2 Samuel 20 pertains to one of the so-called *kaige* segments of B Reigns (i.e. 2 Sam 11:2-1 Kgs 2:11), these having undergone a greater assimilation towards the text of (proto-) MT than have the MS's "non-*kaige*" sections (1 Sam 1:1-2 Sam 11:1; 1 Kgs 22:1-2 Kgs 25:30); see J.D. Shenkel, *Chronology and Recensional Development in the Greek Text of Kings*, HSM 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 7-8.

⁵ For L I use N. Fernández Marcos and J.R. Busto Saiz, *El texto antioqueno de la Biblia griega, I, 1-2 Samuel*, TECC 50 (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1989). For the long-standing scholarly theory that in the Books of Samuel, Josephus is dependent on a Biblical text like that of L, see L.H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship (1937-1980)* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1984), 166-70; E.C. Ulrich, "Josephus' Biblical Text for the Books of Samuel," in *Josephus, the Bible and History*, ed. L.H. Feldman and G. Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 81-96.

⁶ For TJ I use the text of A. Sperber, ed., *The Bible in Aramaic, II* (Leiden: Brill, 1959) and the translation of this by D.J. Harrington and A.J. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, The Aramaic Bible 10 (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1989).

Revolt Initiated

2 Samuel 20 opens in v.1 with a presentation of the revolt's instigator, Sheba, and a quotation of his seditious words.⁷ Josephus' rendition (7.278-279a), e.g. expatiates on the circumstances surrounding Sheba's speaking and its import: "While the leaders were thus arguing with each other there stood up among them,⁸ a certain man of evil character and a lover of sedition (πονηρὸς καὶ στάσει χαίρων),⁹ named Sabaios (Σαβαῖος),¹⁰ the son of Bochorios (Βοχορίου),¹¹ of the tribe of Benjamin (Βενιαμίτιδος),¹² who addressed the multitude in a loud voice,¹³ saying, 'None of us (ἡμῶν)¹⁴ has any portion (μοίρας) of David or any lot (κληρὸν) with the son of Jesse.'¹⁵ And with these words he blew his

⁷ 2 Sam 20:1, in fact, represents the continuation of what is related in the concluding section of chap. 19, vv.42-44 (MT, Eng. 41-43), i.e. the dispute between the men of Israel and Judah concerning their respective attachment to David. Note in particular the reference to Sheba's being "there," namely at the just mentioned disputation in 20:1. Josephus likewise associates Sheba's revolt with the preceding Israel/Judah dispute; see next note.

⁸ The above introductory phrase links Sheba's initiative with the preceding account (7.276-277// 19:42-44) of the dispute between the Israelites and the Judahites. Compare the opening words of 20:1 "now there happened to be there...." See previous note.

⁹ The above collocation is Josephus' equivalent for the (derogatory) terms used of Sheba in 20:1, see MT (אִישׁ בְּלִיעַל), B (υἱὸς παράνομος), L (ἄνηρ υἱὸς λοιμὸς), TJ (נְבֵר רְשִׁיעַ), compare Josephus' πονηρὸς. Josephus employs the expression "lover of sedition" twice elsewhere in his writings, i.e. *Ant.* 13.291 (Eleazar the Pharisee, the opponent of Hyrcanus) and *Vita* 87 (the inhabitants of Tiberias, Josephus' own opponents). On the horrors of *stasis* ("civil strife") as a key theme of Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* (hereafter *BJ*) and one which also finds expression in his account of earlier Jewish history in *Ant.*, see Feldman, "Joab," 335-37.

¹⁰ In the Latin translation of *Ant.* (hereafter *Lat*) he is called "Sabech." Compare MT "Sheba"; BL Σάβεε.

¹¹ *Lat* calls him "Beddai." The form found in the Greek codices of *Ant.* stands closest to B's Βοχορεί; compare MT "Bichri"; L Βεδδαδί (cf. *Lat*). On the reading, see A. Mez, *Die Bibel des Josephus untersucht für Buch V-VII der Archäologie* (Basel: Jaeger & Kober, 1895), 47 who appears to favor the *Lat* form.

¹² Compare MT (אִישׁ יְמִינִי), TJ (נְבֵרָא מְשַׁבְּטָא רַבִּית בְּנִימִין), B (ἄνηρ ὁ Ἰεμενεύ), L (ἄνηρ Ἀραχί). Rabbinic tradition (see *b. Sanh.* 101a) identifies Sheba both with the Ephraimite idol-maker Micah of Judges 17 and with Nebat the father of Jeroboam the Ephraimite according to 1 Kgs 11:26. This identification was facilitated by the qualification of the rebel Sheba as "a man of the hill country of Ephraim" in 20:21.

¹³ The above inserted phrase has no counterpart in 20:1 (I italicize such elements of Josephus' presentation in this essay); it serves to underscore the drama of the occasion.

¹⁴ This is the reading of the "Epitome" and *Lat* which Niese and Marcus follow; the Greek codices read ἡμῶν.

¹⁵ Compare Sheba's two opening statements as cited in 20:1 "We have no portion (BL μερίς) in David and we have no inheritance (BL κληρονομία) in the son of Jesse." Josephus leaves aside the Biblical's Sheba's concluding summons to his fellows, i.e. "every man to his tents,

horn (σαλπίσας κέρατι)¹⁶ and declared (σημαίνει)¹⁷ war (πόλεμον) on the king...."¹⁸

2 Sam 20:2 recounts the division caused by Sheba's initiative, with the Israelites attaching themselves to him while the Judahites join David in his return to Jerusalem. Josephus (7.279b) formulates equivalently: "and they all [MT all the men (> BL) of Israel] deserted David to follow him; only the tribe of Judah [20:2 the men of Judah] stood by him, and brought him back to his palace in [20:2 from the Jordan to]¹⁹ Jerusalem."

David's Concubines

At this point there occurs an interlude (v.3) in the sequence of 2 Samuel 20 relating the returned David's treatment of the concubines whom he had left behind when he fled Jerusalem before Absalom (see 15:16). The historian reproduces this item with various small-scale changes (7.279c): "And the concubines (παλλακάς),²⁰ with whom his son Absalom had lain (συνῆλθεν),²¹ he transferred to another dwelling

O Israel." (He does the same in his rendition of the very similar word (1 Kgs 12:16// 2 Chr 10:16) attributed to the Israelites in the face of Rehoboam's intransigence in *Ant.* 8.219.) Josephus' omission of Sheba's "tent call" might be prompted by the consideration that the latter is here calling the Israelites, not to disperse to their respective residences, but rather to launch a military revolt against David, see the continuation of his presentation.

¹⁶ Compare B 20:1 ἐσάλπισεν τῇ κερᾶτι. In mentioning Sheba's trumpet-blowing only after citing his words to the people, Josephus reverses the order of these items in 20:1.

¹⁷ Note the historic present, a form used with great frequency by Josephus who often introduces it in contexts where LXX reads some past form. See C.T. Begg, *Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy* (AJ 8,212-420), BETL 108 (Leuven: Peeters/Leuven University Press, 1993), 10-11, n. 32. The form occurs a total of 11 times in 7.278-292.

¹⁸ With the above phrase Josephus spells out the significance of Sheba's initiatives as cited in 20:1. Words of the πολεμ-stem constitute a *Leitwort* in 7.278-292, occurring a total of 5 times.

¹⁹ Josephus' reference to David's "palace" here in his version of 20:2 represents an anticipation of/conflation with the opening notice of 20:3 "and David came to his house in Jerusalem."

²⁰ 20:3 specifies their number as ten (Josephus does reproduce that figure in his rendering of Scripture's first reference to these women, 2 Sam 15:16 in 7.199).

²¹ This phrase echoes Josephus' earlier notice, 7.214 (// 2 Sam 16:22) "Absalom ordered his servants to pitch a tent for him on the roof of the palace, and in the sight of the people, went in and lay with (συνέρχεται) his father's concubines." The phrase takes the place of 20:3's own indication concerning the concubines, i.e. "whom he had left to keep the house" (Josephus does reproduce this indication concerning the reason for David's leaving the women behind when he himself flees in his version of 2 Sam 15:16 in 7.199).

(οἰκίαν),²² *instructing their attendants to provide them with all things necessary*,²³ but he himself never again came near them."²⁴

David's Counter-measures

The account of Sheba's revolt resumes in 20:4, following the parenthesis of 20:3, with David issuing instructions about counter-measures to Amasa. The Josephan parallel (7.280) embellishes considerably: "*Then he appointed (ἀποδείκνυσι)*²⁵ Amasa (Ἀμασᾶν)²⁶ commander (στρατηγόν),²⁷ *giving (δίδωσιν)*²⁸ him the office which Joab had held,²⁹ and ordered him to collect as large an army as possible from the tribe of Judah and to come to him after three days,³⁰ in order that he might give the entire force over to him and send him out to make war (πολεμήσοντα, cf. σημαίνει πόλεμον, 7.279) on the son of Bochorios."³¹ Following 20:5 Josephus next (7.281a) recounts

²² Compare 20:3 "(David) put them in a house under guard." Josephus' formulation eliminates the source's indication that the women were to be kept under "house arrest." See n. 24.

²³ Compare the more summary wording of 20:3 "and (David) provided for them." Josephus' formulation accentuates the king's solicitude for the women, while its reference to their "attendants" makes clear how David was able to "provide" for them, even though he himself — so the continuation of 20:3 — never again "went into them."

²⁴ Compare 20:3 "but he did not go into them." Josephus leaves aside the concluding notice of 20:3 "So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as if in widowhood" (RSV), once again (see n. 22), eliminating a source reference to the women's being kept under house arrest.

²⁵ Note the historic present.

²⁶ This is the declined form of the name as found in MT, i.e. "Amasa"; compare B (Ἀμεσσαί), L (Ἀμεσσά).

²⁷ Forms of the root στρατη- constitute a *Leitwort* in 7.278-292 where they occur 6 times.

²⁸ Note the historic present.

²⁹ The entire phrase italicized above has no equivalent in 20:4. It serves to explain why David turns to Amasa—rather than to Joab (who has just successfully crushed Absalom's revolt)—in the face of a new military emergency. The insertion is inspired by 19:13 (*// Ant.* 7.261) where David, as part of his endeavor to persuade the Judahites to bring him back as king, promises to make Amasa supreme commander. In fact, Josephus' formulation here in 7.280 ("giving him the office which Joab had held") is more reminiscent of the wording of 19:13 ("God do so to me, and more also, if you [Amasa] are not commander of my army henceforth *in place of Joab*") than is his rendering of this in 7.261 itself ("he [Amasa] might expect... the chief command of the entire people, like that which Absalom had given him [see 2 Sam 17:25// 7.232]"). See n. 31.

³⁰ Compare 20:4 "(The king said to Amasa) 'Call the men of Judah together to me within three days, and be there yourself.'" Here, as frequently elsewhere in *Ant.*, Josephus recasts Biblical direct discourse as indirect, see Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 12-13, n. 38.

³¹ Just like the related preliminary notice on David's appointment of Amasa (see n. 29),

Amasa's failure to carry through on his instructions: "So Amasa went out, but he was slow in assembling an army, and, as he did not return on the third day...."³²

Faced with Amasa's delay, David turns to another of his retainers, i.e. Abishai (so MT B; L reads Amasa here). The king's first words to the latter are a statement about the "harm" Sheba might do them; there follows a directive ("take your lord's forces and pursue them"), coupled with a motivation for this. Here again, Josephus (7.281b-282) elaborates notably, likewise employing a mixture of direct and indirect discourse in citing the king's words:

...the king said to Joab³³ *that it was not a good thing to grant Sabaïos a breathing-space* (ἀνοχὴν... διδόναι),³⁴ *lest he prepare a greater (force)*³⁵ and cause them more harm and trouble (κακῶν καὶ πραγμάτων) than Absalom had done.³⁶ *"Do not, therefore, wait for anyone,*³⁷ *but take the force now here and the six hundred men"*³⁸ *and with your brother Abisai,*³⁹ *pursue the enemy* (δίωκε τὸν πολέμιον,

this concluding statement concerning the rationale for the instructions the king gives the latter has no parallel in 20:4. This further insertion serves to explain why David specifies that Amasa is to return to him in person.

³² Compare 20:5 "So Amasa went to summon Judah, but he delayed beyond the set time which had been appointed him." Like the Bible, Josephus provides no explanation for Amasa's "delay."

³³ Josephus' identification of David's addressee as Joab rather than his brother Abishai (so MT B 20:6) has a counterpart in the Peshitta (see BHS). This "agreement" likely represents an independent "correction" of MT in view of the fact that it is Joab who takes the lead in what follows, whereas Abishai remains a purely passive presence.

³⁴ This Greek phrase recurs in *BJ* 1.173; *Ant.* 6.73 (Josephus' one further use of ἀνοχὴ in *Ant.* 6.72). The entire formulation italicized above has no counterpart in 20:6; it serves to explain, *post factum*, why David gives Amasa such a short deadline for mustering the troops (three days, 20:4) and why, when he fails to meet that deadline, David immediately turns to someone else.

³⁵ This attached explanation of David's concern that Sheba not be allowed a "breathing-space" has no equivalent in 20:6. It serves to make more plausible the Biblical David's seemingly unmotivated assertion that Sheba "will do us more harm than Absalom": he will indeed be in a position to do this if he is now suffered to "prepare a greater force."

³⁶ Compare 20:6aβ "Now Sheba... will do us more harm (BL κακοποιήσει) than Absalom."

³⁷ Note the shift to direct discourse. Such shifts within one and the same address by a character are not infrequent in Josephus; see Begg, *Josephus' Account*, 123-24, n. 772. The above insertion highlights, once again, David's preoccupation with the urgency of an immediate response to Sheba's threat, just as it stands in sharp contrast with the reference to Amasa's being "slow in assembling an army" in 7.281a.

³⁸ The above directive represents a specification/amplification of David's words in 20:6 "take your lord's servants." Its mention of the "six hundred men" picks up on Josephus' previous references to this group which had constituted the nucleus of David's supporters since his time as a fugitive from Saul, see, e.g., *Ant.* 6.299 (// 1 Sam 25:13), 319 (// 1 Sam 27:2); 7.199 (// 2 Sam 15:18).

compare καταδίωκε ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ, L 20:6). *And wherever you come upon them, try to engage them.*⁴⁰ *And now hasten* (σπουδάσον)⁴¹ *to prevent them*⁴² from seizing fortified cities (μὴ πόλεις ὀχυράς καταλαβόμενος)⁴³ and so causing us great exertion and sweat (ἀγῶνας...καὶ ἰδρωτάς).⁴⁴

Amasa Assassinated

The transition to the story of Amasa's assassination which constitutes the core of 2 Samuel 20 comes in v.7 with the setting out of the royal force in accord with David's directives in v.6. The witnesses differ in their wording of v.7.⁴⁵ Josephus (7.283) aligns his rendition with his own previous reworking of 20:6: "So Joab decided not to wait any longer⁴⁶ and, taking with him his brother and the six hundred men and ordering the rest of the force (δύναμις) in Jerusalem to follow,⁴⁷ he set

³⁹ This component of David's word has, of course, no equivalent in 20:6 which (so MT B) is addressed to Abishai himself. In Josephus' own narration, the phrase serves to prepare the presence of Abishai along with Joab in what follows.

⁴⁰ This insertion spells out the purpose of the "pursuit" of Sheba previously ordered by David.

⁴¹ This term continues to underscore David's preoccupation with the urgency of a prompt response to Sheba's uprising which characterizes Josephus' whole portrayal of the king in his reworking of 20:4-6, see nn. 34, 35.

⁴² Thus the translation of Marcus; the Greek reads αὐτόν, "him," i.e. Sheba.

⁴³ Compare 20:6 "(take your lord's servants and pursue him) lest he (Sheba) get himself fortified cities (BL ὅπως μὴ εὐρή ἐαυτῷ πόλεις ὀχυράς)."

⁴⁴ The collocation "exertion and sweat" is a hapax in Josephus (his two remaining uses of the word ἰδρώς are in *BJ* 3.5; 4.120). The above concluding words of David take the place of the phrase with which the king ends up in 20:6, this varying from one witness to another, see: "and he grasp away our eye" (וַהֲצִיֵּל עֵינֵנוּ), MT [on this reading see R.W. Anderson, "And He Grasp Away Our Eye: A Note on II Sam 20,6," *ZAW* 102 (1990): 392-96 who suggests that the "eye" in question is the "fortified city," the loss of which would deprive David of a valuable observation post]; καὶ σκιάσει τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἡμῶν (B); καὶ σκεπασθῆ ἀφ' ἡμῶν (L); וַיַּעֲרֹב לָנוּ ("and he cause us trouble," TJ [note that Josephus' above formulation stands closest to TJ's reading]). Finally, Josephus' overall amplification of David's word in 20:6 serves, it might be pointed out in conclusion, to accentuate the king's energetic and all-encompassing response to Sheba's revolt.

⁴⁵ On their readings, see McCarter, *II Samuel*, 426-27.

⁴⁶ In thus giving precedence to Joab as the leader of the expedition Josephus continues to highlight that figure at the expense of his brother Abishai (recall that in his rewriting of 20:6 it is to him rather than to Abishai [so MT B] that David addresses himself). By contrast, in all witnesses to 20:7 the reference is to "(the men of) Joab going after Abishai." Note further that the above mention of Joab's "deciding not wait any longer" picks up on the recurrent emphasis on the urgency of a response to Sheba's revolt in what precedes.

⁴⁷ The wording of the above "execution notice" clearly echoes that of David's directive to Joab as cited in 7.282 "... take the force (παραλαβὼν δύναμιν) now here [i.e. in Jerusalem, see

out to attack Sabaios." The encounter between Joab and Amasa which ends in the latter's murder takes place, according to 20:8a, at Gibeon. Josephus' version (7.283b) introduces several further particulars concerning the preliminaries to the fatal meeting: "But when he (Joab) reached Gabaon (Γαβαών),⁴⁸ — *this is a village forty stades distant from Jerusalem*⁴⁹ — he found Amasa there *at the head of a large force....*"⁵⁰

2 Sam 20:8b directs attention — rather obscurely — to Joab's vesture and weaponry as he approaches Amasa (RSV "Now Joab was wearing a soldier's garment, and over it was a girdle with a sword in its sheath fastened upon his loins, and as he went forward it fell out"). In particular the source's reference to Joab's "sword" here raises questions which have provoked many scholarly surmises: Where did the sword "fall" — was it on the ground or rather into the folds of Joab's garments? Was the sword's "fall" an accident or something deliberately brought

7.283] and the six hundred men and, with your brother Abishai...." Compare the indications concerning the makeup of the expedition in the various witnesses of 20:7, i.e.: "(there went out after him [Abishai] the men of Joab and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men..." (MT); "(and he [Abishai] went out after him [Sheba] along with the men of Joab and the Cheleththei and the Pheleththei and all the mighty men..." (B); "(and he [David] called out after Abishai the people and Joab and the Phelti and all the mighty men..." (L); "(and there went forth after him [Abishai] the men of Joab *and the archers and the slingers* and all the warriors..." (TJ). With Josephus' substitution/clarification ("the six hundred men") for MT's (cf. B) reference to "the Cherethites and the Pelethites" compare 7.293 where, in place of the notice of 2 Sam 20:23b about Benaiah commanding "the Cherethites and the Pelethites," he speaks of the latter's being appointed over "the bodyguard *and the six hundred*." Finally, in making Joab set out immediately with the six hundred, while leaving the rest of the force to follow, Josephus underscores the alacrity with which Joab—in contrast to Amasa—acts on David's orders to proceed against Sheba. With this presentation here, compare 7.241 where, in his reworking of 2 Sam 18:14-15, Josephus highlights rather Joab's disregard of David's command that Absalom be spared (18:5) in that he makes Joab himself, rather than his retainers as in the Bible, the one who finally dispatches Absalom; cf. Feldman, "Joab," 331.

⁴⁸ This form of the city's name (MT "Gibeon") corresponds to that found in B (L "translates" with ἐπὶ τοῦ βουνοῦ).

⁴⁹ This indication about Gibeon's location takes the place of the reference to "the great stone" in Gibeon where Amasa and Joab meet according to 20:8a. Contrast *BJ* 2.516 where Josephus localizes "Gobao" at "fifty furlongs" from Jerusalem. Josephus' non-mention of the Gibeon "stone" might have to do with the fact that this has no function in what follows.

⁵⁰ 20:8 makes no mention of any entourage for Amasa. Josephus' indication on the point disposes of a likely reader puzzlement—would Amasa have really approached his rival Joab without accompaniment, as he appears to do in the Bible? In addition, the indication provides an implicit response to another question left without answer in the source, i.e. did Amasa ever, in fact, "get around" to complying with David's order (see 20:4-5// 7.280) that he assemble a force. Thereby, Josephus makes clear that Amasa was not, in fact, "disobedient" to the king's order.

about by Joab? Does the text, in fact, have in view two swords, one visible to Amasa, the other remaining hidden from him?⁵¹ Vis-à-vis such perplexities, the historian's account clarifies the proceedings: "... and Joab went to meet him with his sword (μάχαιραν, so BL) girded on and wearing (ἐνδεδυμένος, compare τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ, BL) a breastplate (θώρακα).⁵² Then as Amasa approached to greet him,⁵³ *he artfully contrived to have* (φιλοτεχνεῖ)⁵⁴ his sword fall (τὴν μάχαιραν ἐκπεσεῖν), *as if by itself* (αὐτομάτως), *out of its sheath* (θήκης). *And he picked it up from the ground....*"⁵⁵

The source now (20:9) relates Joab's reassuring word (asking about Amasa's welfare) and gesture (taking him by the beard with his right hand to kiss him) towards his intended victim. The historian's account leaves aside the former item:⁵⁶ "... and with his other (hand)⁵⁷ seized Amasa, *who was now near him*, by the beard (τοῦ γενείου, BL τοῦ πώγωνος) *as if to kiss* (καταφιλήσων, B καταφιλήσαι, L φιλήσαι) (him)." Josephus likewise compresses in his version of the actual assassination (// 20:10abα), leaving aside both the source's reference to Amasa's "not observing the sword which was in Joab's hand" (v.10aα)⁵⁸ and the gory details of the deed (Joab's shedding of Amasa's bowels to

⁵¹ On these questions, see the survey in E.A. Neiderhiser, "2 Samuel 20:8-10: A Note for a Commentary," *JETS* 24 (1981): 209-10.

⁵² This is Josephus' specification of the source's term for the item of clothing worn by Joab, i.e. ἵματιον (MT, "soldier's garment," RSV), μανδύαν (BL). Josephus reverses the source's order (garment, sword) in view of the key role which Joab's sword will play in what follows.

⁵³ Josephus incorporates this phrase—his equivalent to 20:8ab which speaks, more indeterminately, of Amasa's "coming before them (i.e. Joab and his men)"—into his description of the items worn by Joab (// 20:8bα).

⁵⁴ Note the historic present. Josephus' other uses of the verb φιλοτεχνέω are in *Ant.* 8.70,180 where it lacks the negative connotations attaching to it here in 7.284.

⁵⁵ The whole above formulation represents a clarification of the elusively concise final words of 20:8, i.e. "and he (Joab) went forward and it (the sword) fell (out)" (MT); "and the sword came out and fell (ἔπεσε)" (L); "and the sword came out and it (the sword) came out and fell (ἔπεσεν)" (B); "and he (Joab) went and walked heavily" (TJ). Josephus' rendition provides answers to questions suggested by the Biblical presentation (where did the sword "fall?"; was its fall an accident?), see above.

⁵⁶ This omission might be explained in terms of the fact that Joab's question is left without any response by Amasa in the source.

⁵⁷ I.e. the one not used by him to retrieve his sword from the ground as mentioned in what immediately precedes.

⁵⁸ This "omission" is dictated by Josephus' own earlier presentation according to which Amasa would have witnessed Joab's retrieving his fallen sword from the ground and so could hardly have been "unaware" that Joab had the sword in hand at this point. See, however, n. 60.

the ground and the fact of his "not striking twice," v. 10ba).⁵⁹ His abridgement reads simply: "... and with an *unforseen* (οὐ προῖδόμενον)⁶⁰ thrust (πλήγας, L ἐπάταξεν) in the belly (εἰς τὴν γαστέρα, B εἰς τὴν ψόαν, L ἐπὶ τὴν λαγόνα) killed (ἀπέκτεινεν, BL ἀπέθανεν) (him)."⁶¹

2 Samuel 20 leaves Amasa's assassination without commentary, proceeding immediately (v.10bβ) to relate Joab's and Abishai's resumption of their pursuit of Sheba (cf. v.7). This lacuna is made good by Josephus via the extended reflection he appends to the notice on Amasa's death in 7.284b-285:

This impious and most unholy (ἀσεβές... καὶ... ἀνόσιον)⁶² deed he committed against a brave (ἀγαθόν) youth (νεανίαν),⁶³ who was moreover, his relative (συγγενῆ),⁶⁴ and had done him no wrong (μηδὲν ἀδικήσαντα),⁶⁵ because he envied (ζηλοτυπήσας)⁶⁶ him his office of commander (στρατηγίας)⁶⁷ and his

⁵⁹ Also elsewhere Josephus eliminates or renders less graphic such source items. See, e.g., *Ant.* 6.155 where, in his version of 1 Sam 15:33b ("Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal"), he simply states "He then ordered him instantly to be put to death in Galgala...."

⁶⁰ This is the emendation of I. Bekker which Niese and Marcus follow for the προειδόμενον of the codices. The term might be seen as Josephus' adaptation of the reference (20:10αα) to Amasa's "not observing" the sword in Joab's hand in light of his own earlier presentation. See n. 58.

⁶¹ Josephus' interpretation of the enigmatic 20:8-10αα as set out in 7.283-284a above anticipates that presented by Neiderhauser (see n. 51) who makes no reference to the historian's rendition. By contrast, McCarter, *II Samuel*, 427 in his discussion of 20:8 states "we follow Josephus' understanding of the passage" which he then proceeds to quote in full.

⁶² The collocation "impious and unholy" occurs only here in Josephus.

⁶³ The Bible gives no indication concerning Amasa's age at the moment of his assassination (given the high office entrusted him first by Absalom [2 Sam 17:25] and then by David [18:13; 20:4] one would suppose him to have been a mature man by this point). Josephus' specification on the matter underscores the pathos of his demise.

⁶⁴ This term echoes Josephus' earlier qualification of Amasa as Joab's συγγενοῦς in *Ant.* 7.232 where he reproduces the indications of 2 Sam 17:25 according to which the mothers of Amasa and Joab were sisters, this making the two figures cousins. See also 1 Chr 2:16-17.

⁶⁵ Josephus' double qualification of Amasa as "good" and having "done no wrong" underscores the contrast between him and Joab who is guilty of perpetrating an "impious and most unholy deed" in killing him. The moral contrast between the two men, in turn, accentuates the wrongfulness of Joab's action.

⁶⁶ Josephus' other uses of the verb ζηλοτυπέω are in *Ant.* 2.10; 10.251; 12.190; 13.361. The related noun form is introduced by Josephus into his version of David's directive to Solomon (1 Kgs 2:5-6) that he see to the punishment of Joab for his murders of Abner (see 2 Sam 3:30) and Amasa in *Ant.* 7.386 "Remember also the crime of Joab... who, *because of envy* (διὰ ζηλοτυπίαν), killed two just and brave (ἀγαθοὺς, see ἀγαθόν used of Amasa in 7.284) generals, Abenner... and Amasa...." On Josephus' highlighting of the theme of envy, both in connection with his people's history and as factor in his own life-story, see Feldman, "Joab," 337-50.

being honoured by the king (παρὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ) with a rank equal (ἰσοτιμίας) to his own.⁶⁸ It was for this same reason that he had murdered (ἐφόνευσεν) Abenner also,⁶⁹ except that the former crime (παρὰνόμημα)⁷⁰ seemed to have a decent pretext (πρόφασις εὐπρεπής)⁷¹ to make it pardonable (συγγνωστον),⁷² that is, when considered as an act of vengeance (ἐκδεδικῆσθαι) for his brother Asael;⁷³ but for the murder (φόνου) of Amasa he had no such excuse (παρακάλυμμα).⁷⁴

Sheba Pursued

Following the above insertion, Josephus (7.286) picks up the source's sequence with an expanded version of the "pursuit notice" of 20:10bβ (see above): "And, when he had killed (ἀποκτείνας, see ἀπέκτεινεν, 7.284) his fellow-commander (συστράτηγον),⁷⁵ he started in pursuit

⁶⁷ This term echoes Josephus' notice about David's appointing Amasa "commander" (στρατηγόν) in 7.280.

⁶⁸ Josephus' reference here to David's (intended) awarding of "equal rank" to Joab and Amasa seems to stand in a certain tension with his statement in 7.280 about the king's replacing Joab with Amasa: "Then he appointed Amasa commander, giving him the office which Joab had held." In any event, the double "motivation" which Josephus supplies in 7.284b for Joab's killing of Amasa is highly reminiscent of the commentary on the former's earlier murder of Abner (see 2 Sam 3:27) which he appends in *Ant.* 7.36 "... in truth it was because he feared for his command of the army (στρατηγίας) and his place of honour (τιμῆς) with the king (παρὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ), of which he might have been deprived...." Compare the continuation of Josephus' reflection on Amasa's assassination in 7.285 above.

⁶⁹ Josephus relates Joab's killing of Abner in 7.35// 2 Sam 3:27.

⁷⁰ This word is echoed in David's dying charge to Solomon as cited in 7.386 (// 1 Kgs 2:5-6): "Remember also the crime (παρὰνομίας) of Joab..."; see n. 66. With Josephus' emphatic condemnation of Joab's "crime" against Abner here, compare the view of R. Johanan as cited in *b. Sanh.* 49a who views the reference in 2 Sam 3:27 to Joab's "taking Abner into the midst of the gate [i.e. the customary court setting in ancient Israel] to speak with him privately" as indicating that the former "judged Abner according to the law of the Sanhedrin." See also *y. Soṭah* 1.8 which enumerates a whole series of misdeeds by Abner for which his death at Joab's hands would have been the condign punishment; cf. Feldman, "Joab," 326.

⁷¹ This phrase occurs also in *Ant.* 4.167 where Moses suspects that the Transjordanian tribes' request that he award them the land of the Amorites as pasture for their extensive flocks is a "specious pretext" to mask their fear of having to combat the Canaanites across the river.

⁷² Josephus uses the adjective συγγνωστός also in *BJ* 4.95; *Ant.* 9.285.

⁷³ This formulation echoes Josephus' appended comment on Joab's killing of Abner in 7.35, i.e. "he claimed to have done it to avenge (τιμωρήσαντος) his brother Asael...." On Abner's earlier slaying of "Asahel," see 7.16 (// 2 Sam 2:23).

⁷⁴ Josephus' two other uses of this word are in *BJ* 7.256; *Ant.* 16.233. His concluding comment about the "inexcusability" of Joab's killing of Amasa highlights, once again, the wrongfulness of that deed (see n. 65) and bespeaks Joab's progressive descent into degeneracy.

⁷⁵ This term is a hapax in Josephus. It underscores the parity between Joab and Amasa and is reminiscent of the reference to Joab's envying Amasa's "being honored... with a rank equal to

(ἐδίωκε, B ἐδίωξεν ὀπίσω)⁷⁶ of Sabaios...." To this notice he then attaches a recast version of the reference to the "man" who gives direction to the distracted troops in 20:11. Specifically, Josephus highlights Joab's foresight and control of events by turning the man's initiatives into a matter of his carrying out instructions previously given him by Joab⁷⁷: "... leaving behind one (man) with the corpse (νεκρῶ)⁷⁸, whom he instructed to call out to the army that Amasa had been justly (δικαίως) put to death and punished deservedly (μετ' αἰτίας),⁷⁹ and to say, 'If you are for the king, follow his commander (στρατηγῶ)⁸⁰ Joab and his brother Abishai.'" ⁸¹

Having transposed the content of 20:11 as indicated above, Josephus next (7.287a) proceeds to relate the scene focussed on Amasa's remains as described in 20:12: "So the body lay in the road (ἐπὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ),⁸²

his own"; see n. 68. The entire transitional phrase above, with its resumption of the "killing notice" with which 7.284a concludes, leads back to the main story line after the parenthetical commentary of 7.284b-285.

⁷⁶ 20:10bβ mentions the pursuit of Sheba by both Joab and Abishai. In line with his overall tendency throughout his rendition, Josephus keeps attention focussed on Joab by citing only his pursuit. See n. 81, however.

⁷⁷ In so doing, Josephus supplies an answer to a question suggested by the presentation in 20:11, i.e. what inspired the man to assume the role of "traffic director" as he is described as doing there?

⁷⁸ Compare 20:11a "and one of Joab's men took his stand by him (Amasa)."

⁷⁹ By means of this "instruction" Joab acts to provide the troops with an "explanation/justification" of Amasa's death which lacks an equivalent in 20:11 where they are simply issued a summons. At the same time the wording of Joab's claim about the "justness" (δικαίως) and "deservedness" of Amasa's end stands in ironic contrast with Josephus' own editorial comment in 7.285 about Amasa being a "good" man who had "done Joab no wrong (μηδὲν ἀδικήσαντα)." The effect of the verbal contrast is to make clear that Joab is not only a killer, but also a brazen liar about his deed.

⁸⁰ With this self-characterization Joab underscores the reversal of the previous situation where David had appointed Amasa "commander" (στρατηγόν, 7.280), this prompting Joab to kill his "fellow-commander" (συστρατήγον, 7.286a), thereby now leaving himself as David's sole "commander."

⁸¹ Compare the man's words as cited in 20:11b "*Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab.*" The Josephan Joab is careful to eliminate the source's suggestion of a dual loyalty—with allegiance to Joab being mentioned before attachment to the king himself!—from his version of the words he gives the man to say to the troops. As for Joab's inclusion of Abishai along with himself in the summons to "follow" he prescribes for the man, this might be seen as a delayed utilization of the notice of 20:10b where both brothers are said to pursue Sheba; cf. n. 76.

⁸² Compare 20:12a "So Amasa lay wallowing in his blood on the highway (L ἐν μέσῃ τῇ ὁδῶ)." Here again (see n. 59) Josephus "tones down" the source's graphic language. In addition, his formulation eliminates 20:12's seeming suggestion that—contrary to its previous indications (see 20:10)—Amasa is still alive at this point (so MT B; contrast L's plus: "and Amasa *having*

and all the people swarmed around it and, *as is the way of crowds* (οἶον ὄχλος φιλεῖ),⁸³ *pressed forward to wonder at it and pity it* (ἐθαύμαζον ἠλέουν⁸⁴ προϊσταμενοι),⁸⁵ until the guard *lifted it up* and carried it away from there to a place *far* from the road (ἀπωτάτω τῆς ὁδοῦ), *where he laid it down* (τίθησιν) and covered (καλύπτει)⁸⁶ it with a cloak (ἱματίῳ).⁸⁷

According to 20:13 the removal of Amasa's corpse does have the desired effect upon the troops who now join Joab in his pursuit of Sheba (see 20:10bβ). Josephus' (compressed) report of this development runs: "After this was done [20:13 when he was taken out of the highway], all the people (πᾶς ὁ λαός)⁸⁸ followed Joab."

Sheba's End

The story of Sheba's revolt, 2 Samuel 20, ends with a circumstantial account of the rebel's ignominious demise, vv.14-22 (// 7.288-292). This concluding episode itself commences in v.14 with Sheba taking refuge in an Israelite city. The historian's rendition redirects attention to Joab, Sheba's nemesis: "And after he had pursued (διώξαντι αὐτῷ) Sabaios through⁸⁹ the entire Israelite country [20:14 all the tribes of

died and wallowing in his blood...").

⁸³ The above is a "Thucydidean phrase" according to Marcus, *Josephus*, V, 511, n. c.

⁸⁴ This is the reading adopted by Niese and Marcus. The codices MSP have πλέον ("a long while").

⁸⁵ The above description is a dramatized version of the double mention of the passersby "stopping" before Amasa's body in 20:12. The interjected reference to the crowd's "wonder and pity" (so the reading followed by Niese and Marcus, see n. 84) highlights Joab's previous callousness with respect to the fate of his victim's remains.

⁸⁶ Note the double historic present.

⁸⁷ Compare 20:12b "when the man saw that all the people stopped, he carried (so MT L, B they carried) Amasa [here again—see n. 82—the source's wording could suggest that Joab's victim is still living] out of the highway (BL ἐκ τῆς τρίβου) into the field and threw (B ἐπέρριπεν, L ἀπέρριπεν) a garment (BL ἱμάτιον) over him." Josephus leaves aside the renewed reference to the man's "seeing" the people stopping with which 20:12 concludes given its seemingly redundant character.

⁸⁸ This phrase is identical to that of L 20:13; compare MT TJ "every man," B "every man of Israel."

⁸⁹ The subject of the opening verb ("and he passed through...") in 20:14 is left unspecified, and commentators disagree as to whether Joab or Sheba is intended. Josephus' clarification on the point appears to be inspired by the closing words of 20:13—not employed by him in his rendition of that verse, see above—"the people went out after Joab to pursue (B διώξαι) Sheba the son of Bichri." Josephus transposes this conclusion of 20:13 into the introduction to his version of 20:14.

Israel], *someone informed him that he was in a fortified city* (ὄχυρῶ πόλει)⁹⁰ *called Abelôchea* (Ἀβελωχέα)."⁹¹

Sheba's place of refuge comes under assault by his pursuers in 20:15. The Josephan parallel (7.288b) continues to accentuate Joab's dominant role in the proceedings: "So he went there, and invested the city with his army,⁹² and set up a palisade (χαράκωμα) around it;⁹³ then he ordered his soldiers⁹⁴ to undermine (ὑπορύσσειν)⁹⁵ the walls (τὰ τείχη, BL τὸ τεῖχος) and overthrow (καταβάλλειν, BL καταβαλεῖν) them, *for, as those within the city refused to admit* (μὴ δεξαμένων) *him, he felt very bitter towards them.*"⁹⁶

⁹⁰ This phrase echoes that used by David in 7.282 (// 20:6) where the king urges Joab to prevent Sheba from seizing "fortified cities" (πόλεις ὄχυράς). The verbal link made by Josephus thus draws attention to the fact that what David had earlier feared has now come about, this heightening suspense as to how things will turn out hereafter.

⁹¹ The above takes the place of the (textually problematic) continuation of 20:14 "(he passed through all the tribes of Israel) to Abel of Beth-maacah (MT Abel *and* Beth-maacah, B Ἀβέλ καὶ... Βαιθμαχά, L Ἀβηλά καὶ Βαιθμακκώ); and all the Bichrites [so the emendation of RSV, see 20:1 where Sheba is called "son of Bichri; compare MT בִּיחִרִים, B πάντες ἐν Χαρρεί, L πᾶσαι αἱ πόλεις] assembled [so the MT *qere*, יִקְהִלּוּ and BL ἐξεκκλησιάθησαν; compare MT *ktiv*, יִקְלְוּ, they despised him], and followed him in." On the one hand, Josephus' reformulation eliminates the source's obscure reference to the group of Sheba's retainers whose reason for accompanying him is left unexplained (and who have no role in the continuation of the narrative). More positively, Josephus' substitute wording explains how Joab knew where Sheba had taken refuge (he was "informed" of this), just as his specification of the site as a "fortified" one accounts for the necessity of Joab's besieging it, as he does in what follows.

⁹² Compare the initial words of 20:15 which attribute these opening initiatives to the army as a whole: "and they came and besieged him (Sheba) in Abel of Beth-maacah."

⁹³ Here again, Josephus ascribes to Joab an action which the source represents as an initiative of the entire army, see 20:15aββα "they cast up a mound (so MT הִלְלִי) and B [πρόσχωμα]; compare L χάρακα, "palisade," cf. Josephus' χαράκωμα) against the city, and it (the siege-mound/palisade) stood against the rampart."

⁹⁴ Also this formulation underscores Joab's control of the proceedings; compare 20:15bβ where "all the people who were with Joab" are the subject of the measures designed to bring down the city wall, see above.

⁹⁵ This is the only occurrence of the verb ὑπορύπτω/ὑπορύσσω in *Ant.*; it appears 11(12) times in *BJ*. With his use of this verb Josephus appears to be basing himself on the MT reading in 20:15bβ, i.e. מִשְׁחִימֵם (which, in the line of various modern commentators, he seemingly took as deriving from the noun חִשְׁמָה, thus "to dig a pit under") as opposed to those of BL (ἐνοούσαν) and TJ (מִתְעַשְׂתִּים), both of which refer to the men's "intending" to pull down the city wall (these versions apparently read the MT form—see above—as מִזְמֵם, i.e. "devising"). See further Marcus, *Josephus*, V, 512-13, n. d; and McCarter, *II Samuel*, 428, *ad loc.*

⁹⁶ Josephus' appended "explanation" of Joab's assault on the city has no counterpart in the Bible. Given the fact that in Jewish tradition (see TJ on 20:18; *Gen. Rab.* 94.9; *Eccl. Rab.* 9.2) Joab's interlocutor will charge him with violation of the law of Deut 20:10-15 (// *Ant.* 4.296-297a)

Events take an unexpected turn in 20:16 with the intervention of a "wise woman" who asks that Joab be called. Josephus elaborates in his introduction (7.289a) of this new character: "But a certain wise (σῶφρον, BL σοφῆ) and intelligent (συνετόν)⁹⁷ old woman (γύναιον, BL γυνή),⁹⁸ seeing that her native place (τὴν πατρίδα) was now in its last extremity,⁹⁹ went up on the wall (τὸ τεῖχος, cf. τὰ τεῖχη, 7.288)¹⁰⁰ and summoned (προσκαλεῖται)¹⁰¹ Joab through his soldiers."¹⁰²

2 Sam 20:17 relates the preliminaries to the exchange between Joab and the woman rather circumstantially: the former approaches, is asked if he is Joab, replies affirmatively, is then called upon to pay heed, and declares that he will do so. Drastically compressing at this point, Josephus takes over only the first of these source items: "And when he came near...." Thereafter, he proceeds immediately to his version of the woman's statement/accusation as cited in 20:18-19. The various witnesses diverge markedly in the wording of her address to Joab, particularly for what concerns vv.18-19a.¹⁰³ Josephus' rendition largely

requiring that before non-Cannanite cities are besieged they be offered terms of peace, the addition may be intended to preclude any notion that Joab acted as a law-breaker in initiating the siege (on Joab's reputation as a legal scholar among the Rabbis, see Feldman, "Joab," 325).

⁹⁷ The collocation "wise and intelligent" occurs only here in Josephus.

⁹⁸ Josephus' reference here to "a certain old woman" (γύναιον...τι) echoes the same phrase employed by him of "the wise woman of Tekoa" (2 Sam 14:2) whose services Joab employs in effecting a reconciliation between David and Absalom in 7.182. Like the Bible Josephus leaves the "wise woman" unnamed. Rabbinic tradition (see, e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 94.9; *Eccl. Rab.* 9.2; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 11.13) identifies her as the long-lived daughter of Asher, Serah, who according to Gen 46:17, was one of those accompanying Jacob on his migration to Egypt.

⁹⁹ The above inserted phrase provides a motivation for the woman's initiative; compare the likewise inserted motivation of Joab's assault on the city in 7.288, see n. 96.

¹⁰⁰ Compare B 20:16 "(the woman called) from the wall (ἐκ τοῦ τεύχους)." MT L read "from the city."

¹⁰¹ Note the historic present; compare the past form of BL 20:16, i.e. ἐβόησε(ν).

¹⁰² Compare the direct discourse quotation of the woman's words in 20:16 "Hear, hear! Tell [pl.] Joab, 'Come here, that I may speak to you.'" Josephus' version supplies an identification of those who are to summon Joab.

¹⁰³ MT 20:18-19a reads "They were wont to say in old time, 'Let them but ask counsel at Abel'; and so they settled a matter. I am one of those who are peaceable (שְׁלָמִי) and faithful in Israel..." (RSV). Compare BL "In the beginning they spoke a word saying, 'Surely it was asked in Abel and in Dan [the *Vetus Latina* has this double reading as well] whether they had omitted what the faithful in Israel appointed. They will surely ask one in Abel, even thus, whether they have failed.' I am a peaceable (εἰρηνικά) one of the strong ones of Israel..." (the translation is that of R.P. Gordon, "The Variable Wisdom of Abel: the MT and Versions at 2 Samuel XX 18-19," *VT* 43 [1993]: 215-26, 217) and TJ "Remember now what is written in the book of the law, to inquire in this city long ago, saying 'Was it not here for you to inquire in Abel, if they are at peace

goes its own way with respect to all these variant readings. "... she began by saying that¹⁰⁴ God had chosen kings and commanders (στρατηγούς) to drive out the enemies of the Hebrews (Ἑβραίων)¹⁰⁵ and to secure peace (εἰρήνην) from these."¹⁰⁶ He then has the woman continue with a version of her accusation in 20:19b: "'But you,'¹⁰⁷ she said, 'are bent on destroying (καταβαλεῖν)¹⁰⁸ and sacking (πορθῆσαι) a mother city (μητρόπολιν)¹⁰⁹ of the Israelites' which had done no wrong

(משלמין)? We are at peace (משלמין) in good faith in Israel...." Cf. also the Peshitta which Gordon, "The Variable Wisdom," 221 renders: "They used to say in former times that they would make inquiry of the prophets and then destroy. I am the rewarder of Israel...."

For a detailed discussion of the above readings, see S. Pisano, *Additions or Omissions in the Books of Samuel: The Significant Pluses and Minuses in the Massoretic, LXX and Qumran Texts*, OBO 57 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 146-49; Gordon, "The Variable Wisdom".

¹⁰⁴ Note the use of indirect discourse here. Subsequently, however, the woman will switch to direct discourse for her accusation of Joab (// 20:19), see above.

¹⁰⁵ On Josephus' use of the term "Hebrews" to designate his people see G. Harvey, *The True Israel: Uses of the Names Jew, Hebrew, and Israel in Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, AGJU 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 124-29; cf. n. 109.

¹⁰⁶ Marcus, *Josephus*, V, 513, n. e, avers that the above formulation "seems to be based in part on the Targum" (for its reading in 20:18-19a, see n. 103). In turn, the Targum's rendition of the woman's word with its reference to "the book of the law" seems to have in view the prescription of Deut 20:10-15 that Israel offer non-Canaanite cities—like her city of Abel-Bethmaacah—terms of peace prior to commencing an attack upon them (see n. 96). In any event, however, as will be noted, the similarity between Josephus' formulation here and that of TJ is rather slight; indeed the only element they have in common is their "peace/peaceable," terminology which, in fact, occurs as well in MT BL 20:19a, see n. 103. It would appear then that Josephus found a mention of "peace" of some sort in the text(s) of the woman's words he had available. On the basis of that source indication, he proceeded to develop his own formulation which cites the leaders' God-given task of securing "peace" from the Hebrews' enemies (and which, conversely, contains no reference either to the "making of inquiry at Abel" or to the woman's claim that she [TJ we] is a "peaceful" one in Israel, such as one finds in the Biblical witnesses).

¹⁰⁷ Note the shift to direct discourse at this point in the woman's words. Compare the similar shift within David's words to Joab as cited in 7.281b-282, cf. n. 37. Note further that, while in 20:19 the woman contrasts her own "peaceableness" (v.19a) with Joab's violence against Israel (v.19b), Josephus has her develop a different contrast, i.e. between the divine mandate to Israel's leaders (i.e. that they drive out and impose peace terms on the nation's enemies) and commander Joab's use of violence against Israel itself, see above.

¹⁰⁸ This verb echoes the reference to Joab's ordering his troops to "overthrow" (καταβάλλειν) the city's walls in 7.289.

¹⁰⁹ Note the variation in the woman's designations for the people in 7.289 where they are first called "Hebrews" (see n. 105) and then "Israelites." Such oscillations within a single context are frequent in *Ant*. With the above accusation of Joab by the woman compare that of 20:19ba "you seek to destroy (literally put to death, BL θανατώσαι) a city which is a mother (BL πόλιν καὶ μητρόπολιν) in Israel."

(μηδὲν ἐξαμαρτοῦσαν).¹¹⁰

Joab's response to the woman commences in v.20 with an emphatic disavowal of the destructive intent she has just attributed to him (v.19b). Josephus (7.290a) elaborates on the general's initial reply: "Thereupon he prayed (εὔχεται)¹¹¹ that *God* might continue to be gracious to him (ἴλεων... τὸν θεόν),¹¹² and said that for his part he had no wish to slay (φονεῦσαι) *any of its people*,¹¹³ much less destroy (ἐξελεῖν, see ἐξαίρωσι, 7.289) *so great (τηλικαύτην) a city*."¹¹⁴

Joab continues his response in v.21a with a conditional promise for the city which Josephus reproduces (7.290b) with minor omissions¹¹⁵ and amplifications: "furthermore, if he could get them to deliver up for punishment (πρὸς τιμωρίαν)¹¹⁶ Sabaios, the son of Bochorios,¹¹⁷ who

¹¹⁰ The above qualification of the city underscores the wrongfulness of Joab's assault upon it; the phrase likewise recalls Josephus' characterization of Amasa as having "done Joab no wrong" (μηδὲν ἀδικήσαντα) in 7.284. It takes the place of the woman's additional accusatory question in 20:19bβ "Why will you swallow up the heritage of the Lord?"

¹¹¹ Note the historic present; compare BL ἀπεκρίθη... καὶ εἶπεν.

¹¹² The term ἴλεως with God as subject occurs also in *Ant.* (1.269); 4.222, 424; 10.64. The word picks up on the opening terminology of B 20:20 ἴλεως μοι ἴλεως μοι; compare MT לִי לִי לִי לִי לִי לִי לִי, L μὴ μοι γένοιτο. As will be noted, Josephus in making explicit reference to Joab's "praying to God" here goes beyond the wording of 20:20, none of the witnesses to which mentions the Deity as such. His doing so is especially noteworthy in that, as Feldman, "Joab," 330, 334, 351 points out, in his rendition of Joab's word of 2 Sam 10:12 in 7.125 Josephus eliminates the general's twofold evocation of God/the Lord in the context of a military threat, thereby playing down the piety the Bible ascribes to him.

¹¹³ Compare 7.285 where Josephus speaks of Joab's having "murdered" (ἐφόνευσεν) Abner and of his "murder" (φόνου) of Amasa. By means of this verbal echo, Josephus highlights the contrast between his own assessment of Joab as a "murderer" and the latter's claim about himself here.

¹¹⁴ Compare the briefer word attributed to Joab in 20:20 "(far be it from me) that I should swallow up (see 20:19) or destroy." Josephus, it will be noted, supplies objects (the inhabitants, the city) for the two verbs of destruction which, following the source, he has Joab use.

¹¹⁵ Among such omissions are Joab's initial protestation in 20:21a, which RSV renders "that [i.e. the woman's' previous claim about his destructive intent] is not true." The point would have been sufficiently dealt with in Josephus' preceding amplified version of Joab's statement of 20:20.

¹¹⁶ With this inserted phrase Josephus has Joab spell out the purpose for which Sheba is to be handed over to him.

¹¹⁷ Josephus leaves aside Joab's further qualification of Sheba as "a man of the hill country of Ephraim," doing so perhaps on the consideration that the renegade was earlier introduced as "a Benjamite" (7.278// 20:1).

had rebelled (ἀντάρπαντα) against the king,¹¹⁸ he would give up (παύσεσθαι)¹¹⁹ the siege (τῆς πολιορκίας) and withdraw his army."¹²⁰

Joab's interlocutor responds to his declaration of v.21a by assuring him that "his (Sheba's) head shall be thrown to you over the wall" (v.21b). The historian (7.291a) introduces her assurance with an inserted transitional phrase: "*When the woman heard Joab's words, she asked him to wait a little while, and his enemy's* (τοῦ πολεμιοῦ)¹²¹ head would very soon (εὐθέως) be thrown (ρίψήσεσθαι, BL ριθήσεται) to him."¹²²

In relating the realization of the woman's promise to Joab (see v.21b), the Biblical witnesses diverge. In particular, at the beginning of 20:22 BL reads a longer text ("then the woman went to all the people and she spoke to all the city in her wisdom") than does MT which lacks a counterpart to the mention of her "speaking" to the whole city.¹²³ Josephus' rendition (7.291b) clearly aligns itself with BL's more expansive reading: "... then she went down (καταβαίνει)¹²⁴ to the inhabitants of the city (πρὸς τοὺς πολίτας, BL πρὸς πάντα τὸν λαόν) and cried (εἰποῦσα, BL ἐλάλησεν)...." Whereas, however, BL itself makes no mention of what it is the woman "said" to the people, Josephus at this point introduces an extended, direct discourse speech¹²⁵ by her:

¹¹⁸ Here Josephus transposes into prosaic terms the metaphorical characterization of Sheba as one who "lifted up his hand against King David" of 20:21a.

¹¹⁹ This is the emendation of G. Dindorf, which Niese and Marcus follow, for the παύσεσθαι of the codices and the Epitome.

¹²⁰ Compare Joab's concluding words in 20:21a "... and I will withdraw from the city." Note that Josephus recasts the whole of Joab's speech (20:20-21a) in indirect discourse in 7.290.

¹²¹ This inserted designation for Sheba echoes the same term introduced by Josephus in his rendering of 20:7 in 7.282 where David commands Joab to "pursue *the enemy*." The Josephan stress on Sheba's status as "enemy" of David (and Joab) serves to legitimate the treatment that will be accorded him by the people of Abel-maacah.

¹²² Just as he does with Joab's word to the woman (see n. 120), Josephus transposes the latter's response of 20:21b into indirect discourse.

¹²³ On this difference, see the discussion of Pisano, *Additions or Omissions*, 149-51 (he advocates the originality of MT's shorter reading).

¹²⁴ Note the historic present; compare εἰσῆλθεν (B)/ εἰσεπορεύθη (L).

¹²⁵ Compare his use of direct discourse when citing the woman's accusation of Joab (20:19b) in 7.289c.

... Do you wish to perish (ἀπολέσθαι) most miserably with your children and wives for the sake of a worthless (πονηροῦ)¹²⁶ fellow whom no one even knows, or have him for a king in place of David, who has been your benefactor (εὐεργετήσαντος)¹²⁷ in so many ways, and set yourself up as a single city, against so great and so mighty (τηλικαύτην)¹²⁸ a power (δύναμιν)?¹²⁹

Josephus continues his elaboration of the content of 20:22a by incorporating (7.292a) the "execution notice" of 20:22aβ ("and they cut off the head of Sheba... and threw it out to Joab") into a statement concerning the efficacy of the woman's foregoing speech: "*and so she persuaded (πείθει)*¹³⁰ *them* to cut off Sabaios's head (τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτεμόντας, L ἀφαιροῦσι [B ἀφείλεν (*bis*), i.e. the woman herself] τὴν κεφαλὴν) and throw (ῥίψαι, see ῥιφήσεσθαι, 7.291)¹³¹ it to Joab's army."¹³²

¹²⁶ This qualification of Sheba by the woman reinforces Josephus' own editorial designation of him in 7.278 as "a certain man of evil (πονηρός) character."

¹²⁷ The woman's use of the verb εὐεργετέω in reference to David here echoes the statement attributed to the former supporters of Absalom in 7.258 (// 2 Sam 19:10): "(they reminded their fellows) how David had benefited (εὐεργέτησεν) them...." As one who had "done well" by the city's inhabitants, David stands in double contrast to Sheba who was both "evil" and "unknown" to them.

¹²⁸ In 7.290 Joab uses this same term to characterize the woman's city; here, she, more realistically, applies it to the former's army which is far more "mighty" than her "one city."

¹²⁹ It is worthy of note that Josephus' "un-Biblical" citation of the woman's speech with its double contrast (i.e. between Sheba and David and between the city's own might and that of Joab's army) designed to persuade the inhabitants to surrender the rebel has a certain counterpart in Rabbinic tradition which recounts an extended dialogue between the woman and her fellow-citizens, see *Midr. Sam.* 32.3; *Gen. Rab.* 94.9; *Eccl. Rab.* 9.2. In *Gen. Rab.* 94.9, e.g. (the versions given by the other two sources differ slightly in their details) the dialogue begins with the woman reminding the people of the military successes of David [compare her concluding evocation of the "so great and so mighty a power" facing them in 7.291]. The inhabitants respond by asking what Joab is demanding of them. The woman replies that his demand is for a thousand men and urges that it is better to surrender these than to have the whole city destroyed. The inhabitants thereupon propose that each household will contribute its share to meet the demand. The woman reacts by holding out the prospect that she might be able to get Joab to reduce his demand. She then leaves them, purportedly to go to speak to Joab on the matter; returning, she claims that he has been prevailed upon to require only five hundred. Subsequent reductions, (allegedly) obtained by her, bring the figure down first to one hundred, then to ten, and finally to the single figure of the "alien" Sheba [compare the woman's characterization of him as "one whom no one even knows" in 7.291]. Once this result is achieved, the people proceed immediately to behead Sheba (so 20:22aβ).

¹³⁰ Note the historic present.

¹³¹ 20:22aβ reads the same verb (ῥιπτουσιν); compare B's ἔβαλεν where the subject would seem to be the woman herself.

¹³² In Rabbinic tradition (see, e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 94.9; *Lev. Rab.* 19.6; *Eccl. Rab.* 9.2; *y. Terumot* 8.10) this initiative of the inhabitants of Abel-maacah with regard to Sheba figures as a precedent in discussions of what is to be done in analogous later situations where hostile (Gentile) powers

2 Sam 20:22b recounts the effect of Sheba's execution upon the besiegers: Joab sounds the trumpet, his men disperse to their homes, while the general himself repairs to Jerusalem. Josephus' rendition (7.292b) keeps attention focussed on Joab alone,¹³³ substituting a notice on Joab's place among David's officials drawn from the Biblical "appendix" (20:23-25// 7.293)¹³⁴ to the Sheba story, for mention of the troops' dispersal. His "conflation" of 20:22b-23a thus reads: "*When this* [i.e. the elimination of Sheba] *was done*, the king's commander (τοῦ βασιλέως στρατηγός)¹³⁵ sounded the retreat (σημήνας ἀνακλητικόν)¹³⁶ and raised the siege (ἔλυσε τὴν πολιορκίαν).¹³⁷ Then he came (παραγενόμενος, B ἀπέστρεψεν, L ἐπέστρεψεν) to Jerusalem and was again¹³⁸ appointed (ἀποδείκνυται)¹³⁹ commander of all the people (παντὸς... τοῦ λαοῦ στρατηγός)."¹⁴⁰

demand that Jewish individuals or groups be handed over to them for execution (e.g., Nebuchadnezzar's calling upon the great Sanhedrin to surrender the rebel king Jehoiakim to him, as they do in fact do, basing themselves on the "Sheba precedent").

¹³³ Compare his reworking of the "seige account" of 20:15 in 7.288 so as to accentuate Joab's directive role in the proceedings, see nn. 92-94.

¹³⁴ The list of David's officials in 2 Sam 20:23-25 itself has a "duplicate" in 8:15-18. Josephus' parallel to the latter text is *Ant.* 7.110.

¹³⁵ This designation for Joab echoes that placed by Josephus on the lips of the "guard" in 7.286 (// 20:11) who urges the troops to "follow his (i.e. David's) commander (στρατηγῶ)."

¹³⁶ With the above phrase Josephus establishes a verbal parallel with the conclusion to his account of Joab's repression of Absalom's revolt against David, see 7.242 (// 2 Sam 18:16) "Meanwhile Joab sounded the retreat (σημήνας... ἀνακλητικόν)...." Compare B 20:22ba ἐσάλπισεν ἐν κερατίνῃ (L σάλπιγγι).

¹³⁷ This inserted phrase underscores Joab's fulfillment of the promise he had made to the woman that he "would give up the siege (παύσασθαι τῆς πολιορκίας)" in 7.290. In this instance, at least, Joab shows himself a man of his word.

¹³⁸ With this inserted term Josephus underscores Joab's regaining of his earlier position as sole commander (see 7.110// 2 Sam 8:16), following the elimination of his rival Amasa whom David had appointed to the rank of his co-commander, see 7.280,284b-286a, cf. n. 140.

¹³⁹ Note the historic present. This term harks back to the same word used of David's ill-fated "appointment" (ἀποδείκνυσι) of Amasa to the office of "commander" which "Joab had held" in 7.280. Thereby, Josephus underscores the reversal of that earlier situation now that Amasa has been eliminated.

¹⁴⁰ Compare B (πρὸς πάση τῇ δυνάμει Ἰσραὴλ) and L (ἦν ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς στρατιᾶς Ἰσραὴλ) 20:23a. Compare also Josephus' own earlier designation for Joab in 7.110 (// 2 Sam 8:14) στρατηγὸν... ἀπάσης... τῆς στρατιᾶς. See n. 138.

Conclusion

In the conclusion to this essay I shall now attempt to briefly recapitulate my findings with regard to the overarching questions which I articulated at its opening. With regard to the first of those questions, i.e. which text-form(s) of 2 Samuel 20 did Josephus employ? it must be admitted that our reading of *Ant.* 7.278-292 has yielded few clear-cut indications on the matter. Thus, the divergence among the witnesses to the text of Josephus itself in 7.278 leaves it uncertain whether Josephus is following B or L 20:1 for the name of Sheba's father (see n. 11). Similarly the fact that he agrees (7.281) with Peshitta 20:6 in making Joab rather than Abishai (so MT B)/ Amasa (so L) the recipient of David's command need not entail Josephus' acquaintance with the *Vorlage* of the Peshitta in this instance (see n. 33). Again, the evidence in favor of Marcus' supposition of the historian's (partial) dependence on TJ 20:18-19aα in formulating (7.289) the woman's opening word to Joab shows itself to be quite meager (see n. 106). In fact, there are only two cases in 7.278-292 where Josephus' use of one text-form of 2 Samuel 20 rather than another seems unambiguously clear. First, his mention of Joab's ordering the "undermining" of the city's walls (7.288), stands in the line of the MT reading in 20:15 *contra* the joint BL and TJ reference to the troops "intending" to throw down the wall (see n. 95). Secondly, in 7.291 he reads a parallel to the plus of BL 20:22aα with its explicit mention of the woman's "speaking" to the inhabitants. The fact that these instances point in different directions regarding the Biblical text of the Sheba story utilized by Josephus could suggest then that he knew the story in several text-forms.¹⁴¹

Our passage proved considerably more revealing for what concerns my second opening question, namely, which "rewriting techniques" did Josephus employ in 7.278-292?¹⁴² Among such techniques the most pervasive in Josephus' "Sheba story" are his additions to/expansions of the source's content. Within this category the historian's inserted evaluation of Joab's assassination of Amasa (7.284b-285) and the

¹⁴¹ In this connection recall too that the phrase "causing us great exertion and sweat" with which Josephus has David conclude his directive to Joab about Sheba in 7.282 finds its closest parallel in TJ's rendition of the king's final words in 20:6 ("and he cause us trouble"; see n. 44).

¹⁴² The various categories of such techniques which I will distinguish in what follows naturally overlap, sometimes to such an extent that it is difficult to know how to classify a given instance. Moreover, the different categories often appear in conjunction, e.g., an "omission" of a source item going together with a substitute "addition" to the Biblical account.

woman's speech to her fellow-citizens which he introduces in 7.291b stand out both for their extent and their lack of any source basis as such. However, Josephus' account further evidences a whole series of smaller-scale amplifications of Scriptural data, these concerning, e.g., Sheba's seditious speech (7.278, compare 20:1); the fate of David's concubines (7.279b, compare 20:3); David's commissioning of Amasa (7.280, compare 20:4) and subsequently of Joab/Abishai (7.281-282, compare 20:6); the "force" accompanying Amasa at Gibeon (7.283, compare 20:8); Joab's "instructing" the man whom he leaves behind with Amasa's corpse (7.286, compare 20:10b β -11); the crowd's reaction to their seeing the corpse (7.287, compare 20:12); Joab's being "informed" of Sheba's whereabouts (7.288a, compare 20:14), his motive for assaulting the city (7.288c, compare 20:15), the rationale for the woman's intervention with Joab (7.289a, compare 20:16); Joab's response to her (7.290, compare 20:20-21a); the woman's hearing Joab's statement and asking him for time (7.291a, compare 20:21b), and her "persuading" her fellow-citizens to accede to his demands (7.292a, compare 20:22a).

Conversely, Josephus also omits or abridges source items. He does so most notably in his compression of the circumstantial report of the preliminaries to the exchange between Joab and the woman of 20:16-17 in 7.289a. At the same time, numerous other, smaller elements of the Bible's presentation also get reduced or passed over entirely by him. These include: Sheba's "tent-call" (20:1b β); conflation of the indications of 20:2b-3a α on David's return (see 7.279a); Joab's question about Amasa's welfare (20:9a, compare 7.284a), the circumstances surrounding Joab's fatal blow (20:10a, compare 7.284b), the double mention of the troops' halting before the corpse of Amasa (20:12, compare 7.287); the (problematic) reference to those who follow Sheba into the city (20:14b, compare 7.288a; see n. 91); the designation of Sheba as a Ephraimite (20:21a, compare 7.290); the troops' dispersal to their homes (20:22b β , compare 7.292b); and finally the conflation of the notices of 20:22b γ -23a on Joab's return to Jerusalem and his position as David's (sole) commander in 7.292c.

Re-arrangement of the source's sequence constitutes yet another, albeit minor, Josephan rewriting technique in 7.278-292. So, e.g., he reverses the order in which 20:1 cites Sheba's trumpet blowing and speech (7.278) as also that of Joab's vesture and sword (20:8, compare 7.283c).

Finally, Josephus also undertakes to modify/adapt source data in a variety of respects and with a range of purposes in view. At the terminological/stylistic level, e.g., he introduces uses of the historic present form (see n. 17) and indirect discourse, in several instances likewise alternating between indirect and direct discourse in a single speech (see 7.281-282 [David to Joab] and 7.289b-290a [the woman to Joab]). He likewise interjects a number of *Leitworte*, e.g., terms of the στρατηγ- (see n. 27) and πολεμ- (see n. 18) stems into his rendition. The metaphorical phrase "to raise the hand against" of 20:21 is transposed into its prosaic equivalent, "to rebel against" in 7.290. The historian's modifications also, however, affect the story's content. Thus, the royal concubines are those with whom Absalom had "lain" (7.279b), rather than those in whose charge David had left his house (20:3). Similarly, he replaces (7.283) mention of the "great stone" at Gibeon (20:8) with a reference to the city's distance from Jerusalem, just as he substitutes (7.283, cf. 7.282) an allusion to the "six hundred men" who accompany Joab for the source's "Cherethites and Pelethites" (20:7, MT). Given the dominant role he will play in what follows, Josephus has David commission Joab (7.281) rather than Abishai (20:6, MT B) when Amasa fails to do as directed. In the exhortation which he attributes to the "man" who stays with Amasa's corpse (7.286), the historian is careful to have him mention David in first place prior to Joab (contrast 20:11). Among such contentual modifications Josephus' clarifying reworkings of obscure source segments are especially noteworthy, see, e.g., his handling of the Amasa-Joab encounter (20:8-10) in 7.283-284a and of the woman's word to Joab (20:18-19) in 7.289b, cf. too his specification regarding the identity of the one who traverses the Israelite territory, i.e. Joab (7.288, contrast the indeterminate wording of 20:14a).

Closely related to the question of the rewriting techniques employed by Josephus in 7.278-292 is the further one cited in my introduction, i.e. what distinctive features to Josephus' version of the Sheba story result from his use of those techniques? In response to this latter question, I would note here the following points about the distinctiveness of Josephus' rendering. He "streamlines" the Biblical account at certain junctures (notably the preliminaries to the exchange between Joab and the woman). Obscure features of the source's presentation are replaced by more readily understandable ones and motives supplied for characters' acting as they do. Questions left unanswered in 2 Samuel 20 itself (e.g., what we are to make of Joab's killing of Amasa? What did the woman actually "say" to her fellow-citizens?) receive a response.

Distinctive nuances to Josephus' characterization of each of the active personages of the story may also be noted. He accentuates David's solicitude for his unfortunate concubines (7.279b) as well as the vigor and foresight of the king's response to Sheba's uprising (7.280-282), just as he has the woman of Abel-Maacah call attention to his "benefactions" to the city (7.291). As for the rebel Sheba himself, Josephus highlights his "wickedness" (7.278,291) and "seditiousness" (7.278), together with his status as David's declared "enemy" (7.282,291) this serving to legitimate the harsh treatment that is ultimately accorded him. By contrast, he goes beyond the Bible in his explicit qualification of Amasa as blameless (7.284a) and his interjected indication (7.283) that Amasa had indeed assembled a large force as David had directed. The story's sole female character undergoes noteworthy enhancement in Josephus' rewriting where she is called not only "wise" (20:16), but also "intelligent" (7.289) and allotted an extended, "un-Biblical" speech to her fellow-citizens (7.291b), whose "persuasive" effect is explicitly noted (7.292a).¹⁴³ It is, however, above all Josephus' retouching of 2 Samuel 20's portrait of Joab which stands out in its complexity and ambiguity.¹⁴⁴ Overall, Josephus consistently underscores the general's active and dominant role in the concatenation of events. On the positive side, he enhances Joab's ready obedience to David (see 7.283) and his fulfillment of his promise to the woman to lift the siege (see 7.290,292). Moreover, in contrast to the Bible itself, he explicitly depicts Joab as "praying to God" (7.290, see n. 112). On the other hand, these positive traits are counterbalanced by an array of intensified negative features, i.e. the calculation, impiety, envy, and callousness displayed in Joab's murder of the hapless Amasa without even the "decent pretext" to which he could appeal in justifying his earlier assassination of Abner (7.285). As will be recalled, these negative elements in Josephus' characterization of Joab appear all the more reprobate in light of their

¹⁴³ A good deal has been written recently on Josephus' (varying) treatment of Biblical women, see, e.g.: L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Deborah," in *Hellenica et Judaica: Hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetsky*, ed. A. Caquot et al. (Paris/Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 116-28; B. H. Amaru, "Portraits of Biblical Women in Josephus' Antiquities," *JJS* 39 (1988): 143-70; C.A. Brown, *No Longer Be Silent: First Century Jewish Portraits of Biblical Women* (Louisville: John Knox, 1992); C.T. Begg, "The Abigail Story (1 Samuel 25) according to Josephus," *Estudios Biblicos* 54 (1996): 5-34; idem, "The Rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13) according to Josephus," *Estudios Biblicos* 54 (1996): 465-500; B. Mayer-Schärtel, *Das Frauenbild des Josephus. Eine sozialgeschichtliche und kulturanthropologische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1996).

¹⁴⁴ These are features which mark Josephus' entire portrayal of Joab (as also that of the Rabbis), see Feldman, "Joab."

contrast with, e.g., the innocence of his victim Amasa (7.284b) and the "pity" shown by the crowd before the latter's remains (7.287).

The last of my opening questions concerned the messages Josephus' retelling of the Sheba episode might be intended to convey to *Ant.*'s double target audience, i.e. cultivated Gentiles and fellow Jews.¹⁴⁵ For the former readership, Josephus offers an account whose wording echoes that of their own historical tradition, see, e.g., his opening qualification (7.278) of Sheba as a "lover of *stasis*," with its echo of Thucydides' classic description of civil strife at Corcyra,¹⁴⁶ and the "Thucydidean phrase" οἶον ὄχλος φιλεῖ inserted by him in 7.287 (see n. 83).¹⁴⁷ His rendition is further designed to cater to another prevailing interest of high-placed Gentile readers in its accentuation of the story's military aspects (see, e.g., the soldierly reflections he attributes to David in 7.280-282 or his depiction of Joab's facility in manipulating his sword in 7.283).¹⁴⁸

What though would Josephus' "Sheba story" (be meant to) offer his fellow Jews? Here, I suggest that his rendition aims to present the historian's co-religionists with a twofold message. More generally, like many other passages of *Ant.*, the episode as retold by him serves to remind Jewish readers of the wrongfulness and nefarious consequences of internicine conflict — the very thing that had so fatally marred their recent revolt against Rome: Judaism had had more than enough of "lovers of dissension" like Sheba and killers of their own kind like Joab.¹⁴⁹ The story likewise functions, however, as part of Josephus' personal *apologia* directed to his compatriots. In particular, it would remind them that their Biblical tradition features innocent victims of

¹⁴⁵ On *Ant.*'s double audience, see L.H. Feldman, "Use, Authority, and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. M.J. Mulder and H. Sysling, CRINT 2/1 (Assen: van Gorcum, 1988), 455-518, 470-71.

¹⁴⁶ On the point, see Feldman, "Joab," 335.

¹⁴⁷ This phrase is reflective of the contempt held for crowds and their doings that Josephus shared with many representatives of Greco-Roman tradition, see L.H. Feldman, "Il Ritratto di Assalonne in Giuseppe Flavio," *Revista Biblica Italiana* 41 (1993): 3-30, 17-19. In using the phrase Josephus is thus signalling to aristocratic Gentile readers that he is "one of them."

¹⁴⁸ On Josephus' embellishment of the military dimensions of Biblical history throughout *Ant.* and his reasons for doing so, see Feldman, "Joab," 326-27.

¹⁴⁹ On the wide-going influence of Josephus' personal experiences of the horrors of intra-Jewish conflict during the Revolt upon his retelling of Biblical history in *Ant.*, see Feldman, "Joab," 335-37.

the envy of fellow Jews like Amasa, the royal favorite (see 7.284b-285). Accordingly, they should not be quick to credit the allegations made against Josephus himself by Jews envious of the honors accorded him by a succession of Roman emperors.¹⁵⁰

In sum, a close reading of even so miniscule a portion of *Ant.* as its Sheba story helps make clear just how multi-faceted an enterprise the historian's retelling of Biblical history is.

ABSTRACT

Following the repression of Absalom's uprising, a new threat quickly emerges for David, i.e. the revolt of Sheba, described in 2 Samuel 20. This article presents a detailed study of Josephus' version (*Antiquities* 7.278-292) of the latter incident in relation to its Biblical source (as represented by MT, 4QSam^a, Codex Vaticanus, the Lucianic MSS of the LXX, and Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets). Overarching questions addressed by the article include: the text-form(s) of 2 Samuel 20 available to Josephus, the rewriting techniques applied by him in this section of *Ant.* (e.g., rather extensive additions to/amplifications of the Biblical data), the distinctiveness of his rendition (e.g., with regard to the characterization of the personages involved) and the messages this might have been intended to convey to Gentile and Jewish audiences. The article likewise gives some attention to the handling of Sheba episode elsewhere in postbiblical Jewish literature.

撮 要

本文旨在研究約西法在《古史》中，重述示巴叛亂（撒下二十章）的寫作特點及技巧。透過與不同舊約古代譯本（如 Targum、Lucianic MSS of LXX）及抄本（如 MT、4QSam^a、Codex Vaticanus）比較，作者探討了以下的課題：約西法當代可獲得那些記載撒母耳記下第二十章的版本；約西法重新記載示巴叛亂的寫作技巧、塑造人物角色的手法，及記述當中帶給當時外邦人和猶太人的信息。

¹⁵⁰ In this connection it is of interest to note that the conclusion to Josephus' autobiography features precisely the envy-inspired but unavailing efforts of fellow-Jews to get him in trouble with his Roman patrons, see *Vita*, 424-429. See further Feldman, "Joab," 337-50 for Josephus' verbal paralleling of envious Joab and his own arch-rival during the Revolt, John of Gischala.